

REMARKS

The Office action dated March 6, 2003 and the cited references have been carefully considered.

Status of the Claims

Claims 5, 6, and 32-34 are pending.

Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph.

Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Claims 5, 6, and 32-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okumura et al. (U.S. Patent 6,384,417; hereinafter "Okumura") or JP 2000-171563.

The Applicants respectfully traverse all of these rejections with respect to the remaining claims for the reasons set forth below.

Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, First Paragraph

Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventors, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. Specifically, the Examiner stated that "said acicular body having a polygonal cross" is new matter. Claim 6 has been amended to recite "said acicular body having a polygonal cross section", which is disclosed in the original specification. No new matter has been added. Therefore, claim 6 now overcomes this rejection.

Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner stated that he does not know what "said acicular body having a

polygonal cross" means. Claim 6 has been amended to recite "said acicular body having a polygonal cross section", which is disclosed in the original specification. No new matter has been added. Therefore, this rejection is now overcome.

Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 5, 6, and 32-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okumura or JP 2000-171563. The Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection because Okumura or JP 2000-171563 does not teach or suggest all of the limitation of each of claims 5, 6, and 32-34.

"To establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art." M.P.E.P. § 2143.03, p. 2100-128 (8th ed., Rev. 1, Feb. 2003).

Okumura discloses scintillator pieces having a thickness of about 2 mm, a width of about 1 mm, and a length of about 30 mm. Column 5, lines 61-63.

Similarly, JP 2000-171563 discloses the same scintillator pieces as Okumura with the same dimensions. Column 8, lines 40-41.

In contradistinction, claims 5, 6, and 32-34 recite acicular bodies having a cross-sectional dimension less than about 20 μm . Therefore, Okumura or JP 2000-171563 does not teach or suggest all of the limitations of each of claims 5, 6, and 32-34.

Since Okumura or JP 2000-171563 does not teach or suggest all of the limitations of each of claims 5, 6, and 32-34, Okumura or JP 2000 1717563 does not render these claims obvious.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the claims are patentable and in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the rejection is requested. Allowance of claims at an early date is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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